


COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

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COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Definition Probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local governmental agency.

Purpose

1. To plan and shape the logical and orderly urban development through logical and orderly evaluation of local governmental agencies.
2. To plan for the provision of present and future service needs of the County and its communities.

Goals

1. Insure orderly urban development in the areas adjacent to a city or district. In this capacity, sphere of influence may reflect the philosophies of the General Plans adopted by the cities and the County, and Master Plans of Special Districts as a comprehensive guide to their orderly development. The sphere of influence does not necessarily need to indicate within a precise time frame the ultimate boundaries of a city or district. It may attempt to describe an area within which common problems are likely to occur, the solutions to which may be commonly shared and become inherited responsibilities.
2. To plan for logical units of local government that will provide citizen services in the most economical fashion and to insure that each unit will have a sound economic potential to finance the required services.
3. To promote cooperative planning efforts between cities, County, and districts; to insure the execution of concepts of the respective general plans as they relate to cooperative planning.
4. To assist other governmental districts and agencies in planning the logical and economic extension and use of all governmental facilities and services, thus avoiding unnecessary duplications.

5. To coordinate standards for property development and encourage timely urbanization with adequate provision of essential services.
6. To assist property owners to plan comprehensively within a governmental structure for ultimate use and development of their land.

Factors

State law requires that at least the following factors be considered when developing a Sphere of Influence:

- (1) The maximum possible service area of the agency based upon present and possible service capabilities of the agency.
- (2) The range of services the agency is providing or could provide.
- (3) The projected future population growth of the area.
- (4) The type of development occurring or planned for the area, including, but not limited to residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- (5) The present and probable future service needs of the area.
- (6) Local governmental agencies presently providing services to such area and the present level, range and adequacy of services provided by such existing local governmental agencies.
- (7) The existence of social and economic interdependence and interaction between the area within the boundaries of a local governmental agency and the area which surrounds it and which could be considered within the agency's sphere of influence.
- (8) The existence of agricultural preserves in the area which could be considered within an agency's sphere of influence and the effect on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of such preserves in the event that such preserves are within a sphere of influence of a local governmental agency.

Policy

1. Priorities on Annexations and Special District Formations

The general policy of the Commission, as reflected in its policy regarding Spheres of Influence, is that all urban development, whenever reasonable, shall be municipal developments. Unless there are strong reasons to change it, priorities in annexations to governmental entities to promote this policy shall be in the following order:

- A) Annexation to a city, rather than a special district, if both can provide the same services at approximately the same cost and environmental impact.
 - B) Annexation to a district or a city rather than the formation of a new special district or city.
 - C) Formation of a new political entity is the last alternative. Whenever a new political or taxing entity is indicated, the formation of a self-governing special district is the least desirable.
- ### 2. Municipal Spheres of Influence and Overlapping Special Districts and Cities
- A. The Sphere of Influence of a city may overlap the Sphere of Influence of a special district.
 - B. Whenever a special district provides a municipal service, the Sphere of the City supersedes that of the special district.
 - C. The Sphere of Influence of the special district providing municipal service shall not extend beyond that of the city's Sphere of Influence.
 - D. The Sphere of Influence of sanitary and water districts may be coterminus with the Sphere of the city or cities they serve. The Commission may condition annexation to a sanitary or water district with annexation to a city or require annexation to sanitary or water district when territory is annexed to a city.

E. Commission may, as a condition of approval, order detachment from any special district that does not already provide services to all or a portion of a city.

3. Spheres of Influence for Unincorporated Areas.

- A. The Commission may set Spheres of Influence for unincorporated preserves for specified purposes such as agricultural or open space or areas of future incorporation.
- B. Areas for future incorporation will be considered whenever the County's General Plan includes land designated for urban development that is not within the Sphere of Influence of an existing city or special district and is of sufficient magnitude to expect eventual incorporation.
- C. Commission may designate areas for future urbanization without designating it as a Sphere of Influence for a specific type of governmental organization; e.g., city, special district or county service area.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING SPHERE OF INFLUENCE LINES

- 1. A determination must be made by the Local Agency Formation Commission regarding which local agency is the logical one to provide services and necessary public facilities in a sphere of influence. A great deal of weight will be given to the city's or district's ability and willingness to provide these services. Therefore, it is essential that demonstrated evidence be given that the city or district has or will have the resource capability beyond its own internal needs to provide services in the area to be included in the influence lines.
- 2. Land that is in an agricultural preserve would ordinarily be excluded from the Sphere of Influence of any city or district.
 - a. Priority for inclusion shall provide for non-prime agricultural land rather than prime agricultural land.
 - b. Land may be included in Sphere of Influence of city or district if it has no effect on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of such preserves.

- c. Status of non-renewal of contracts and pending withdrawal may be considered when developing a Sphere of Influence.
 - d. Area may be included in a Sphere of Influence when the appropriate General Plan provides for a use other than agricultural or open space.
3. Adequate planning for services which should be considered in determining the most feasible city and special district influence lines include the following:
- A. Sewerage facilities, either developed or planned.
 - B. Police and fire protection.
 - C. Waste disposal.
 - D. Provision of water transmission mains, water supply either planned or developed
 - E. Parks and recreation service.
 - F. Compatible street circulation.
 - G. Economic and social relationships.
 - H. Geographic or natural topographic features such as rivers, ridgelines, ravines, etc.
 - I. Man-made barriers, such as freeways, major streets, railroads, etc.

Review of Existing Spheres of Influence

The Commission shall review periodically the Sphere of Influence of each city and district. Sphere of Influence will be reviewed whenever there is:

- A. General Plan Amendment by either the county or city that affects the municipal service requirements of an area.
- B. Any other change of conditions or policies of the county, city or district that might affect the service capabilities to the area to be served.



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